



If All Else Fails...



111 0 6

Chapter 1 by GeneralSh

The crack of dawn was said to have come over an hour ago. Lightning, the herald of a dark and gloomy day, sounds its horn, booming through the night, lighting up the sky like a flash of hope. But no hope will be found tonight. The night rules supreme. The statues of the death jesters, the metal laughter machines, stand guard over the mire. Not even the sun can brighten the cloud of dread hanging over the world. Because the Arena has awoken. The great metal portcullis that stood watch over the entrance to that hellish place groaned and cried, prying open like a dead miser over his beloved purse. Below the hundred foot walls, a crowd of thousands stand, silently bearing the hideous noise of screaming metal, begging for mercy against the relentless cold wind. Many were shaking. Most were crying. They have all been chosen to be a part of this year's Bloodfest, with all of them brutally butchering each other in ways unimaginable to all but the wicked Jester Kings, who are the manifestations of the evil this world has been cursed with. There's an evil crackling, followed by the laughter of hell, and the doors start to close. The crowd surges forward, knowing that being left outside those gates is certain annihilation. Most make it. Most. Those that aren't trampled underfoot, skewered on the portcullis or too horrified to move make it inside, while the portcullis doors finally close, like the miser returning from Hell to reclaim what he lost. Those outside are left to watch as mechanical harlequins awaken,

peering out at them through the gloom. What once was quiet became a symphony of screams, death cries and the sound of flay.

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heard how it starts. Sacrifices are chosen. People are... eaten... And the ritual of becoming occurs. The chosen few are made into mindless slaves, forced to serve the ones who will fight. Often, the ones like Mackson end up the slaves. The weak, the unintelligent, the ones unable to take a life. Only the most ruthless and most brutal are allowed a chance to fight for their life. But what happens inside those walls, as Mack has no way of knowing, will give him a tool that will make him not only a warrior, but possibly even a contestant.

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